



# Friends of the Litchfield Community Greenway, Inc.

*“Greenways connect the places we live with the places we love”*

PO Box 778, Litchfield, CT 06759

[www.litchfieldcommunitygreenway.org](http://www.litchfieldcommunitygreenway.org)

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Dear Co-Chairs Cohen and Gresko, Vice-Chairs Slap and Palm, Ranking Members Miner and Harding, and members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Litchfield Community Greenway located in Litchfield, I write to ask you to support Raised House Bill 5291, An Act Authorizing Bonding for Bikeways, Greenways and Recreational Trails.

This important bill would increase the bond authorization for the Recreational Trails and Greenways Grants program to \$6 million.

As you may be aware, in Fall, 2021, DEEP issued a request for recreational trails proposals with only \$3 million available, and received 65 applications requesting over \$22 million. The \$3 million was granted to twenty worthy projects, but another \$7 million in highly ranked proposals were unable to be funded, and we expect the ongoing need for investments in Connecticut's outdoor recreation infrastructure to continue.

The Litchfield Community Greenway has been working for more than twenty years to create a safe, serene, non-motorized route from the center of Litchfield to Bantam and beyond. Our ultimate goal is to connect with the Steep Rock trail system in Washington.

We are an all-volunteer organization whose funding comes solely from individual donations and grants. We receive no funding from any governmental entity yet we have been able to create nearly four miles of greenway for the use of walkers, runners and cyclists of all ages and abilities. Our recent Recreational Trails grant application, while highly ranked, was not funded due to the funding limitations.

The next phase of the Litchfield Community Greenway will involve substantial excavation expenses that will take years to fund if relying solely on individual donations and grants no matter how generous. It is for such circumstances that the Recreational Trails grant program is so important.

It is our belief that recreational trails for hiking, running and cycling attract new residents to our area and create healthy recreational opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.

Sincerely,

Clifford A. Cooper

President

Friends of the Litchfield Community Greenway

P.O. Box 788

Litchfield, Connecticut 06759

